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Memorandum of Conversation
385

REVIEWED BY *MAC/MA* DATE *3.13.81*

RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. DATE: *FEBRUARY (S), 1971*
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

SUBJECT: Jewish Defense League Threat

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Stephen James, Citizens' Exchange Corps
Peter Semler, EUR/SOV

COPIES TO:

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SY

USUN Mr. Rattner
Embassy Moscow
FBI - Mr. Gruentzel
L/UNA - Mr. Bettaues
IO/OIA - Mr. Hennes
L/EUR - Mr. Brower

FEB 1971

Mr. James called me at home on the evening of January 28. He said that Lawrence Fine of the Jewish Defense League had called him to demand that he come to JDL headquarters to show cause why the Citizens' Exchange Corps should not stop its promotion of exchange visits with the USSR. Otherwise, "we will pay you a big fat visit" in Mr. Fine's words. Mr. James said that he had met Fine more than halfway by offering to buy him a drink at a midtown bar between their offices but he refused to go to JDL Headquarters. This was not enough for Fine.

Mr. James reported Fine's approach to the police and to a CBS correspondent. The latter called Mr. Fine who had no hesitations about confirming that he had indeed called Mr. James. Mr. James also said he was trying to interest the New York Times in the story.

James reported that he had arranged a meeting between Soviet Embassy officers (we later learned that Counselor Nesterov was among them) and representatives of the American Jewish Congress. He recalled the telegram of protest he had sent Kosygin about the Leningrad Trial. In vague terms, Mr. James wondered whether the State Department could not somehow endorse the purposes of the Citizens' Exchange Corps, particularly since the organization enjoys non-profit status under tax laws.

I thanked Mr. James for the information, suggested he should stay

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in touch with the New York police, and promised only to pass on his report to my superiors.

COMMENT:

See Mr. Mainland's memorandum of conversation of January 13, 1971 for information about an analogous threat made by Fine to Robert Bryman of the "Professional Seminar Consultants". Although Mr. James did not say this in so many words, he was clearly concerned that the JDL activities could affect his travel exchange operations unfavorably.

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